



Excellency,

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, working in collaboration with the NGO Coalition to End Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, applaud the historic adoption of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention 190 (2019), concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. Further, we call upon all Member States of the United Nations to ratify C190, and to move resolutely towards effective implementation without delay.

The NGO Coalition is an initiative of four substantive committees of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) which have come together to assure ratification and implementation of ILO C 190: the NGO Committee on Financing for Development, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (NY), the NGO Committee on Social Development and the NGO Committee on Migration, in partnership with the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons. The Coalition was created to advance ratification of ILO C 190 and to promote its long-term goal of ending violence and harassment in the world of work.

Numerous reports¹ have highlighted the pervasiveness of violence and harassment in the world of work, and their negative impacts on the physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic well-being of those affected. The UN Secretary General's Report on Violence against Women Migrant Workers (July 2019)², urges Member States to ratify and implement ILO C 190, and to protect migrant women from violence in the world of work, while the UN General Assembly Resolution A/Res/74/127³ notes the Convention, and urges Member States to adopt effective measures to combat violence and harassment impacting migrant women workers.

The COVID 19 crisis sped up trends in the changing world of work, and exacerbated pressure on populations facing the most vulnerabilities especially, women, youth, children, migrants and refugees as well as people with disabilities. The risks faced by workers, including domestic violence affecting women working from home, cyber-bullying⁴ in the case of tele-working, health risks faced by frontline workers in the health, agriculture, food-production, processing, distribution and other sectors are compounded and potentially deadly in the

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/briefingnote/wcms_738115.pdf,
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_744676.pdf,
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/brief-online-and-ict-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-covid-19>

² <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/235>

³ <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/127>

⁴ <http://info.primarycare.hms.harvard.edu/blog/sexual-violence-and-covid><https://www.saiglobal.com/hub/blog/sexual-harassment-in-a-changing-workplace-through-the-context-of-culture-and-covid-19>

absence of standards. Economic hardships and food insecurity have increased dramatically for those faced with unemployment and precarious work. Increased risks for work-related violence form part of these deteriorating socio-economic trends.

However, the crisis also presents an opportunity to abandon the old "normal", and to transform the world of work for the betterment of peoples' lives. The crisis has served to highlight the urgent need to protect all people from violence and harassment across the full range of workplaces and work-related activities impacting their daily lives. Governments must rise to the challenges of creating safe workplaces free of violence and harassment.

For these reasons, ratification of ILO C 190 is critical, as well as the full implementation of the Convention and its accompanying Recommendation 206. Together, these instruments provide the legislative and policy framework as well as detailed guidelines for addressing violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence. They apply to all types of workplaces in the formal and informal economy, including domestic work, and work from home.

Now is the time to act.

1. Because an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach is vitally needed for ensuring that no one – including all workers and other persons in the world of work, both in the formal and informal sectors, in rural and urban areas, and irrespective of their contractual status – is subject to violence and harassment occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work, regardless of the type of workplace.
2. Because good practice requires an overarching framework of laws and policies informed by the provisions of C 190 and R 206. These should encompass prevention, protection, enforcement, human rights, inclusion, equality, non-discrimination, occupational safety and health, remedies for those affected, as well as guidance and training for those implementing workplace programs.
3. Because ratification of ILO C 190 reinforces implementation of the UN Sustainable Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 3, the realization of inclusive human development and well-being, SDG 5, regarding gender equality and the elimination of violence against women, SDG 8 and 9, regarding the promotion of decent work and sustainable enterprises.
4. Because the UN is celebrating its 75th anniversary, and the 25th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995. Specifically, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its 12 Critical Areas of Concern calls for ending violence against women (D), and recognizing women's human rights and their right to work (F). The UN itself endorses human rights and non-violence.
5. Because certain categories of persons often find themselves in vulnerable situations which can lead to violence and harassment in the world of work. Such persons include migrants, domestic workers, persons from marginal or minority groups, low caste women, trafficked persons, LGBTQ, youth, children, older persons, people with disabilities, and persons living with HIV. Legal protections can prevent occurrences of violence and harassment, providing redress and protections from reprisals or threats often compounded by vulnerability.
6. Because the costs of violence and harassment are on the rise, and because this impacts both the public and private sectors with regard to the well-being of workers, enterprise productivity and profitability. ILO C 190 is key to addressing these challenges and to achieving a positive organizational culture, and a safe, productive work environment.

We, through the following signatures, endorse ILO C 190, recognizing everyone's right to be free from violence and harassment in the world of work and to safety, dignity and respect at work. We urge all Member States to join those Governments that have already ratified the Convention, in adopting and adhering to these ILO standards aimed at effectively addressing the pressing issues of violence and harassment in the world of work.